97-84033-27

Adelbert College

Samuel Ball Platner,
1863-1921

[Cleveland]

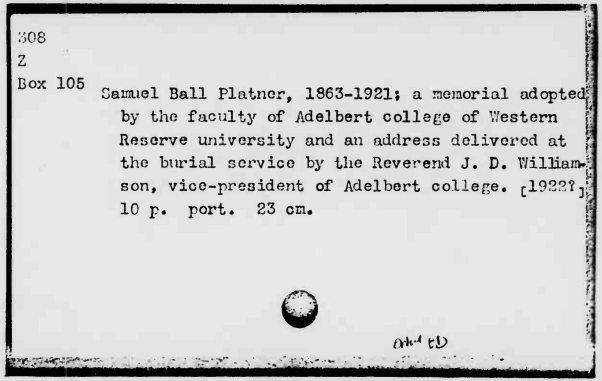
[1921]

97-84033-27
MASTER NEGATIVE #

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
PRESERVATION DIVISION

BIBLIOGRAPHIC MICROFORM TARGET

ORIGINAL MATERIAL AS FILMED - EXISTING BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD



308
Z
Box 105

Samuel Ball Platner, 1863-1921; a memorial adopted by the faculty of Adelbert college of Western Reserve university and an address delivered at the burial service by the Reverend J. D. Williamson, vice-president of Adelbert college. [1922?] 10 p. port. 23 cm.

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: *Reproductions may not be made without permission from Columbia University Libraries.*

TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35 mm REDUCTION RATIO: 11:1 IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 3-3-97 INITIALS: MS

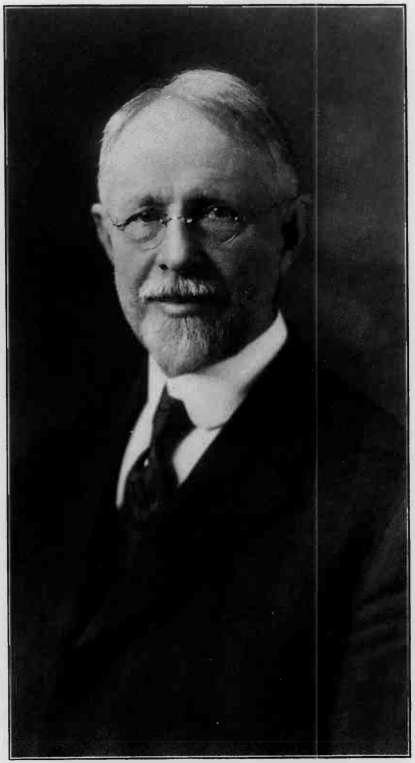
TRACKING # : MSH 22310

FILMED BY PRESERVATION RESOURCES, BETHLEHEM, PA.

Samuel Ball Platner

1863 - 1921

308
N
Box 105



SAMUEL BALL PLATNER

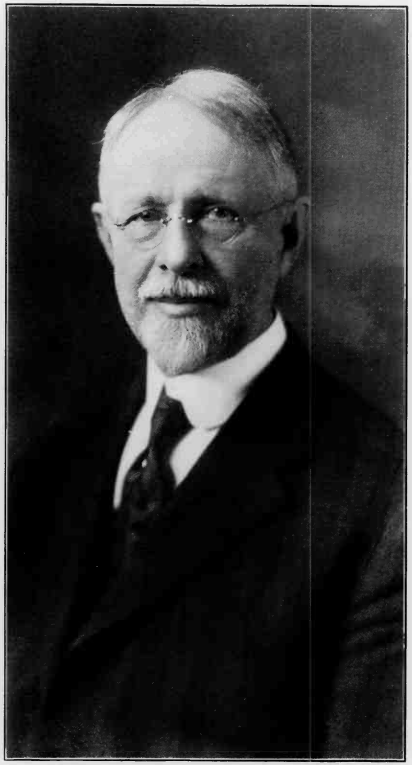
1863 - 1921

A memorial adopted by the Faculty of Adelbert College of Western Reserve University

and

An address delivered at the burial service by the Reverend J. D. Williamson, Vice President of Adelbert College.

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE



SAMUEL BALL PLATNER

1863 - 1921

A memorial adopted by the Faculty of Adelbert College of Western Reserve University

and

An address delivered at the burial service by the Reverend J. D. Williamson, Vice President of Adelbert College.

Memorial

In honor of Professor Samuel Ball Platner
Adopted by the Faculty of Adelbert College

SAMUEL BALL PLATNER, for thirty-six years a member of the Faculty of Adelbert College, died at sea on the twentieth of August, 1921, while on his way to Europe. For several years his health had not been good; but there had been no intimation of an early end, and his death fell with a crushing shock upon his colleagues and his many friends.

Mr. Platner was a native of New England, and was graduated from Yale College with the degree of Bachelor of Arts at the age of nineteen, and with the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the age of twenty-one. Immediately after receiving the latter degree, he came to Adelbert College, there to spend the remainder of his life. He began in 1885 as Instructor in Latin and French, became in 1890 Assistant Professor of Latin, and in 1892 Professor of Latin, a position he held uninterruptedly for the last twenty-nine years of his life. His entire professional career was devoted to this college.

He was a real scholar, a man whose ambition it was to discover truth in his own chosen field, and to publish it, when discovered, in print or in speech. At Yale he had been a pupil of William Dwight Whitney, America's most distinguished philologist; and the influence of this great master can be clearly seen in the early years of his pupil's scholarly career. During the first decade Mr. Platner's studies were mostly of a linguistic nature — in Sanskrit, Greek and Roman meter, and Latin syntax. His results were mainly published in the form of articles contributed to the philological journals of the country; but he also produced two books: a translation from the German of Lucian Müller's *Greek and Roman Versification*, in 1892, and an edition of *Selected Letters of Pliny*, in 1894.

His first visit to Rome, however, left him completely subject to the fascination of the Eternal City, and he gradually turned to the study of her history and topography. During the nineties this change became practically complete, and when, in 1901, he served as President of the American Philological Association, his presidential address had for its subject, "The Credibility of Early Roman History". His activity along these lines, and his periodic visits to Rome, resulted in close acquaintance with some of the world's leading scholars in the field of Roman topography, especially Christian Huelsen, Secretary of the German Archaeological Institute, and Thomas Ashby of the British School at Rome. In 1904 appeared the first edition of his "Topography and Monuments of Ancient Rome", dedicated to Huelsen. A second edition, considerably enlarged, was published in 1911. The preface to this work modestly disclaims originality and describes the book as "only a compilation". But this so-called compilation has beneath it a thorough study of the sources. It is well organized, lucid, and withal an admirable handbook not only for the studious visitor in Rome, but also for those readers of Latin authors and students of ancient history who appreciate the importance of a thorough acquaintance with the scenes in which great men lived and great events took place. The book is universally recognized as a careful, reliable, and learned work. It speedily took its place as the standard book on the subject in the English language, and it is so still.

In his last years he was engaged upon a dictionary of Roman topography. He had begun this before the war in collaboration with Thomas Ashby, but the war compelled Mr. Ashby to withdraw in the early stages of the work and Mr. Platner himself brought the book almost to completion. The main purpose of the journey to Europe, on which he met his death, was to give this book the finishing touches by a few months' work in Rome. It is a source of genuine satisfaction to scholars that Mr. Ashby has consented to complete and bring out this dictionary. From the point of view of independent scholarship, it will be Mr. Platner's *magnum opus*, and will undoubtedly form an indispensable tool for the serious student of Roman history and topography.

He had also begun an English translation of Aulus Gellius for the Loeb Classical Library, which is to be finished by his friend, Professor John C. Rolfe of the University of Pennsylvania.

One of the most remarkable things about Mr. Platner was his extraordinarily wide and close acquaintance with scholars. He was active in the learned societies of his field, the American Philological Association and the Archaeological Institute of America, and he was one of the moving spirits of a small philological club, in which about a dozen of the leading classical philologists of this continent met on terms of closest intimacy. Nearly all the American classical scholars of any account knew him, were known by him, and were fond of him. At the age of thirty-seven he was elected President of the American Philological Association, one of the youngest men who ever held that position. When the Archaeological Institute founded the American School of Classical Studies in Rome, he was among the chief promotors of the project. He acted for fourteen years as the Secretary of its Managing Committee, and in 1899-1900 served as its Professor of the Latin Language and Literature.

He was a man of exceptionally high standards, both in scholarship and in all other walks of life. For him culture was no thin veneer, but a solid accomplishment built up on a substantial foundation of thorough knowledge. He hated a dilettante. It was part of this general thoroughness that he should stand for Greek and Latin as the basic studies of liberal culture. He must get back to the fountainhead. This intellectual thoroughness and contempt for mediocrity pervaded all his work as a teacher. He expected and insisted on a real mastery of the subject he taught. He was most successful with the earnest and able students, and he liked to separate them from the rest in order that real progress could be made. He was not interested in mere numbers, believing that the community is more greatly improved by the intensive education of a relatively small number of leaders than by inflicting information upon a host of indifferent and half-unwilling students. About his classroom methods there was nothing showy, sensational, or rhetorical — nothing in any degree meretricious. He went straight into his subject, and he always went deep. However his students might groan over the test to which he put them, they were impressed with the atmosphere of learning he created; and perhaps the most significant thing they carried from his classroom was an appreciation of the depth of real culture and the grandeur of learning.

In no sense was there anything small about him. He was one of the truly great-hearted, looked at everything in a large way, and was untouched by petty things. He was a genuine patrician in all his tastes. Elegance and high tone were conspicuous in his conversation, dress, and bearing. Whatever he did, whether it was writing a book, teaching a class, sailing a boat, or driving an automobile, his performance was marked by unfailing sanity and sureness. One of his most striking qualities was conservatism. On his index of abominations were the elective system, the popularization of liberal culture, coeducation, woman suffrage, and most of the leading educational and social movements of his time. He was a firm admirer of the virtues of republican Rome, and he believed that the greatest period of her history lay back in these earlier days. The praise of Julius Caesar, as voiced, for example, by Mommsen, aroused in him the most determined antagonism. He was himself akin in some ways to the elder Cato, of whom he reminded his friends not only by his uncompromising devotion to solid and conservative principles, but also by his facility in humorous and epigrammatic utterance.

He was simple, direct, and transparently honest in every thought and act. All affectation, show, and diplomacy were foreign to his make-up. His mind was always clear, and even in difficult and complicated circumstances he never appeared subject to mental confusion. In his social relations he was genuinely cordial. To his friends he was unfailingly true. His genial humor brightened every company, his frankness and kindliness endeared him to all, his high ideals inspired admiration everywhere; and it would be hard to find a man more widely known and loved in circles where ability, accomplishment, and culture were conspicuous. In many matters of principle and policy he was diametrically opposed to most of his associates, but his geniality prevented all bitterness, and whatever differences arose he continued to be the most beloved member of the circle in which he moved.

He was a man of deep religious convictions. The childhood faith he learned from his mother, a woman of strong personality, remained unshaken throughout his life; and we may well believe that the notable steadiness and strength of his character were due in large measure to the sustaining power of this ever-present spiritual influence.

He came to Adelbert College soon after it was brought from Hudson and saw it pass through changes of the utmost significance. From a coeducational institution it became a college for men. From a small college in the vicinity of Doan's Corners, with all the earmarks of the country, it grew to be the arts department of an urban university. He found in it a curriculum of required studies and left one almost wholly elective. He passed through all the stages from the time when Greek and Latin were bulwarks of the college course to the ascendancy of practical politics, applied social science, and business. The control of students was revolutionized in his time by the elective system, the honor system, and student self-government. All these changes, except the removal of coeducation, were flatly opposed to his fundamental views. He was particularly concerned over the withdrawal of Greek from the list of required subjects, and he always dated from that event the decline of the humanities as an element of education. That his temper lost no sweetness in the face of these disappointments was a most eloquent testimony to the grandeur of his disposition.

When Mr. Platner first arrived at the College, he found a high standard of classical scholarship already established by Thomas Day Seymour and Bernadotte Perrin. It is high praise, and it is a fact, that he maintained that standard and continued uninterruptedly the reputation won for the College in the classical field by these predecessors. In this respect, as well as in the depth of his culture, in the elegance and distinction of all his tastes and mental processes, and in the general charm of his personality, he has left a challenge and an inspiration to all who come after him.

Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus
Tam cari capitis?

Address

Delivered at the Burial Service of Professor Samuel Ball Platner by the Reverend J. D. Williamson

ORDINARILY I feel that a service restricted to comforting and helpful passages of Scripture, prayer to our Heavenly Father for His comforting and sustaining presence, and hymns expressive of our faith and hope, best befit an occasion of this sort, but somehow I feel—and I wonder if we do not all share the feeling — that we cannot lay to rest this dearly beloved form without a brief word of tribute to that which he was; for his was no ordinary life. Some of us who knew him intimately feel that it was a very extraordinary life. He stood out among men not only in his physical appearance, but as well also in his qualities of mind and heart. He was a gifted man. Nature had richly endowed him and he had made fine use of his endowments. He was a man of scholarly tastes, and had attained to high rank among scholars. It was to complete a great scholarly work upon which he had been engaged for a number of years that he left us only a few weeks ago. But not only was he a scholar; he was a teacher as well. He had to an unusual degree the power of imparting what he knew, and this had been his mission and his service at Western Reserve University for 36 years, — for a few years as instructor, and the balance of the time as full professor. Unto hundreds of young men who met him in the classroom he opened up the ancient world and the Latin tongue, and gave to both a reality and an interest possible only to the great teacher.

But, my friends, as we are gathered here this morning for this service in memory of the beloved dead, we are not thinking so much of his greatness as a scholar and a teacher, much as we admired him and honored him for these attainments. These can more fitly be spoken of elsewhere and by others. We are thinking here of what he was in his greatness of soul, his strength of character, his personal qualities; we are

thinking of what he was to us as a man and a brother beloved; above all what he was to his own. He was large in his physical frame, impressive in his personal presence, a man of wide culture, distinguished among his fellows as scholar and teacher; but there was something more and better than all this, may I not say, that gave color and highest worth to all else; he was a humble, sincere, steadfast follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was born into a Christian home; he was nurtured in the Christian faith by a rarely gifted mother, and from the faith into which she led him he never departed. There was a strength yet simplicity in his faith that was as noteworthy as his scholarly attainments. He was, of course, entirely familiar with the Biblical criticism of the day and with the conclusions of the great Biblical scholars. With these conclusions, so disturbing to the faith of many, he was to a very considerable degree in sympathy, but his faith was thereby confirmed rather than weakened. He rested with a calm and abiding confidence upon the great fundamentals. He knew whom he believed. I have heard few men pray to whom the fatherhood of God and things eternal seemed more real than to him as he led us to the throne of grace in the room of prayer. I can in no better way illustrate the simple faith that characterized him than by mentioning an incident that occurred in a little gathering of friends (and I think I shall not be violating the proprieties in mentioning it), when some one spoke critically of the familiar prayer of our childhood,

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take,

and he at once expressed disapproval of the criticism, remarking that he prayed that prayer every night of his life.

What could better reveal what he was, the childlikeness of his trust, the strength yet simplicity of his faith! And all this had its flowering forth into a life and character that made him singularly attractive to those who knew him. He was a man of strong convictions, of decided views, and he did not hesitate to avow them when he knew that others would strongly disagree with him. It did not matter that others, and especially in the educated world, thought him old-fashioned and out of sympathy

with the trend of the times. He was perfectly content, if need be, to stand alone. And yet such was his personality that difference of opinion made not the slightest difference with his friendships. So marked was his sincerity and consistency of view that discussion rather strengthened than weakened the ties that bound others to him.

And what he was to some of us I dare not attempt to say. We are asking ourselves when we shall ever again know one so kind, so true, so genuine, so unselfish, so loyal, — one so rich in everything that gives to friendship its beauty and its worth. We admired him as a man of culture, as a scholar among scholars; but we *loved him as a brother*. Still less would I dare speak of what he was to his own. Do not all of us who were in touch with the home life know that it was a relationship that was ideal?

We can scarcely yet realize that our beloved friend has gone. We knew him but yesterday in the full strength of his splendid powers, and now he has passed from us. But must not that life, so useful, so rich, so beautiful, be even now the more abundant life into which the Lord whom he loved and served has already ushered him?

END OF
TITLE